

For Immediate Release

October 18, 2006

**JOINT STATEMENT BY SENATORS SCHUMER, CLINTON, AND REPRESENTATIVES
HIGGINS, SLAUGHTER, AND REYNOLDS ON EXPEDITING MAJOR DISASTER
DECLARATION**

Washington, DC-Today the Western New York Congressional delegation released the following statement:

Western New York continues to suffer from the effects of a massive snowstorm that caused thousands of homes to go without power for several days. In our visits and discussions with government officials we know the extent of the devastation and have been working to support the work being done to restore power, clean-up downed trees, and ensure that government at all levels is responding with all deliberate speed. Our staffs continue participating in conference calls with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure that the federal government's response and assistance meets the highest standards. Today, we are asking the President and FEMA to expedite the Governor's request for a major disaster declaration for the four impacted counties of Erie, Genesee, Orleans, and Niagara so that both individual and public assistance will be available to households, businesses, and public entities. The City of Buffalo as well as Erie County have been working hard in response to this emergency and we commend them for their efforts. We are concerned equally about those in the surrounding suburbs who await power restoration. We are asking National Grid to continue their efforts to restore power as quickly as possible. As we have said before, everyone needs to keep records so that they will be able to work with FEMA on what expenses are reimbursable by the federal government. The people of Western New York are strong and resilient. We stand with you in

this time and are working to make sure everyone receives the right information and assistance. Much progress has been made to date but more must be done. As your Congressional delegation we will do everything in our power to make sure that both the short and long term recovery efforts continue to help every one of our citizens.